



DOWN SOUTH NEWS

AN OCCASIONAL NEWSLETTER OF:
NEW NEWS, SLIGHTLY OLDER NEWS, NOT SO RECENT HAPPENINGS,
ANNOUNCEMENTS OF EXCITING THINGS TO COME,
HISTORICAL EVENTS OF INTEREST, GEMS OF WISDOM,
SATIRE, AND OTHER GOOD STUFF,
PUBLISHED BY THE SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE,
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Volume 36, Number 2
Spring 1988

If you have news please send to DOWN SOUTH NEWS, P.O. Box 773,
Phenix City, AL 36867.

The original 'DOWN SOUTH NEWS' was published monthly during the
1930's and 40's at Worcester, Mass. The Editorial Staff was Dr. F. P. and Mrs.
Annie Ensminger.

LADIES NIGHT, E. ALA.-W. GA.

The annual Men's Fellowship Banquet was held at Southern Union
College February 20 with attendance over 200.

After an excellent dinner an OPERATION SHARE presentation
was made by Mike Davidson of Birmingham.

The two attendance trophies were presented: LaGrange United for the
most present, and for the largest percentage (small churches) Columbus
United.

The OUTSTANDING PEOPLE OF THE YEAR awards were:

Layman of the Year

Durwood Collings of Alexander City
Horace Gregory of Todd

Laywoman of the Year

Carol Backstrom of Bethel

Minister of the Year
Jerry Cole of Todd
Roger Jones of Columbus United

As some of the Fellowship officers thought that Warren Blankenhorn was about to retire, he was presented with a plaque for having worked with the Fellowship for many years.

Dr. Sills was presented with a chain saw to 'help him cut through the conference red tape' as our new Interim Conference Minister.

The program of the evening was the inspirational singing of the three Backstrom sisters.

JOYCE MYERS & ED BROWN TIE KNOT

Joyce Myers of the OCLL staff will no longer be going it alone. Joyce, whose vivacious personality has been appreciated all over our 'down south' area, will now be working in harness with old friend Ed. They will shortly be going to France as Ed has accepted a country parish there. He and Freda had served in France before coming to us during the 1960's.

Ed and Joyce entertained friends from all over the world at their celebration the evening before their big event. And to make certain that Ed wouldn't feel that he was 'playing second fiddle' two wedding cakes were built to share with the well-wishers. On top of one was written "Joyce and Ed" and on the other, "Ed and Joyce." This was done in Joyce's favorite color, blue. The wedding on February 27th was sort of a double-header. It took two ministers to do the splicing, Rev. Dr. Reuben Sheares, Joyce's boss at OCLL, and a Rev. Ms. from Calif.

SWEETHEART BANQUET

On February 12 the Andalusia Antioch Church hosted the South Alabama-Northwest Florida annual Sweetheart Banquet. After bountiful helpings of delicious food the men of Antioch in derby hats, string tires, & affixed handle-bar mustaches harmonized the sweet melodies of the season. Everyone participated in the popular TV game: "Win, Lose or Draw." This was emceed by Ms. Shelli Sturgis, the pastor's wife.

Churches attending were: Andalusia First, Antioch, Baker-Good Hope, Baker Pyron's Chapel and Headland-Blackwood.

FUN IN THE SON

is the theme of this year's spring Mini-Camp at Laguna Beach, Florida April 22, 23, 24. The Rev. Herbert Young, our program director, promises that this camp will be one of the best yet. The Rev. Roger Jones will be camp director and the Rev. Dr. Horace Sills will lead our Sunday morning worship. If you have not received a registration form, write SPRING MINI-CAMP, P.O. Box 773, Phenix City, AL 36867. All churches of our Southeast Conference are invited. Two nights lodging, 5 meals and wall-to-wall fun and fellowship still costs only \$35.00 per person.

INTERIM CONFERENCE MINISTER ARRIVES JANUARY 20 AND GETS INTO THE FIELD IMMEDIATELY

The Rev. Dr. Horace Sills, wife Louise and 'son' Max Schnauzer have become a welcome part of the life of our Southeast Conference. A priority of Dr. Sills is to get to know each association's leaders, ministers and wives. This is being done by cluster meetings.

February 19 was a luncheon hosted by Dr. Sills for the West Georgia-Valley people. Dinner also on 19 February for those of the Roanoke area. March 5th at Alexander City we met with the Western Cluster and on Sunday the 6th with the North Alabama Association leaders. Dr. Sills preached at Caddo that morning.

March 25th completed the cluster meetings and was held at Pyron's Chapel for the South Alabama-Northwest Florida Association. At this cluster the moderator, Rev. Larry Crook honored Max for his patience, forbearance and quiet endurance of those long trips and waiting outside for his 'mom' and 'dad' during the cluster meetings.

SAMARITAN FUND REVIVED

The East Alabama Association's long dormant Samaritan Fund has been reactivated due to a tragic accident of one of our ministers and his youngest daughter last fall. Coming home from church they were hit by an auto that had run a stop sign.

Having changed jobs due to the closing of the textile mill where he has worked for many years; was without hospital insurance.

The response of our churches and individuals has been heart-warming. The Rev. John Schofield is treasurer of the Samaritan Fund and to date has received over \$5,000 that he has forwarded to the minister and family. John also arranged a rent/utility payment schedule in which churches could help for over a year. These payments have been send directly to the family and not recorded by John.

Anyone wanting to give to this fund may contact the Rev. John Schofield, P.O. Box 155, Valley, AL 36864 or call (205) 756-7087.

The other officers of this fund are: Ms. Betty Moon-Chair and Mr. J. K. Murphy-Vice Chair.

NEW CHURCH BUILDERS CLUB

Everyone agrees our Southeast Conference needs more churches. Around the turn of the century Rev. Hilliard Elder organized and built over 20 new churches. During the 1950s and into the early '60s, several new churches were assisted by the Church Builders Club by gifts of only \$5 given by many, many persons. Today 20 years later this plan will still work. You too can help build new churches for only \$5 gifts. These are also being called shares. Won't you send a check or money order to the Conference office designated for the CHURCH BUILDERS CLUB?

TWO NEW FINGERS POINTING TOWARD THE HEAVENS

On January 3rd our Bethel Church at West Point, Ga. dedicated their new steeple that had long been the dream of the late Mrs. Frank Ayers. With sister churches of the valley sharing the event this was truly a time of celebration.

On February 28th the Pleasant Grove Church near LaFayette, Ala. dedicated their steeple. This added symbol of worship was given by Ms. Kathryn Childers in memory of her late husband Otis, who had been a deacon for many years.

HELPING ELON HOME FOR CHILDREN WORK PROJECT EVEN IF YOU CAN'T GO

Leon Lee, project director of the work week for Elon Home, asks that every church member give \$1 to assist in the purchase of building materials. All the workers going from our area will be paying their own expenses and be contributing toward buying these materials they will be working with. Leon's address is: 6312 19th Ave., Valley, AL 36864.

If you would like to join in the week of work, and some of us are after Conference and going, Leon's phone number is (205) 756-3350.

Word week begins Monday, June 13th.

A Scripture passage rarely quoted:

"Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Quit praying and get the people moving!'"

Exodus 14:15

OPERATION SHARE

Bob Niefert of Birmingham Pilgrim Church brought Mike Davidson to East Alabama-West Georgia Ladies' Night to explain how each of our churches could purchase more food for their money to help stock up churches' food pantries for the needy. These are a great financial savings and, at the same time, share these savings with our own church members. Operation Share's slogan is "Anyone who eats qualifies." Through their huge quantity purchasing power the National Share people can supply monthly food orders of \$35 to \$45 for only \$12.

Rev. Roger Jones is our Southern Area project director and has been comparing prices, item by item, with local super markets and found the claims of Operation Share to be true.

This is a once a month purchase. We will send a truck up to Operation Share's warehouse in Birmingham once a month. It will bring back the orders from our local churches to a local distribution point, i.e., Valley area, where local churches send their truck/cars to pick up groceries for their church people.

There is no commitment by anyone to be in this program beyond one month at a time. Those desiring to know more about Operation Share may

contact Rev. Roger Jones at (404) 882-0378 or write: 429 Sivill Rd., LaGrange, GA 30240.

Beyond the great \$ savings, Operation Share requires only that each person participating in their church's food program to give 2 hours per month to Christian service, community service, etc., and this service to be determined by their own church.

WORK CAMP AT ELON HOME FOR CHILDREN

Leaving LaGrange Saturday, June 11, E. Ala.-W. Ga. Men's Fellowship, wives and youth will motor in convoy to Elon College, N.C. After worshipping at the Elon College Church on Sunday and catching up on resting during the afternoon will be ready Monday to begin working at the Home.

Leon Lee, project director, already has the work schedule made out and the week of June 13 thru 17 promises to be a meaningful experience for all who participate. This is the second summer that the Fellowship has worked at the Home.

MINISTERS OF SMALL CHURCHES CONVOCATION

This event is to be held for ministers and wives at Camp Rockridge just west of Franklin, Ga. and east of Roanoke, Ala. The dates are Friday & Saturday, June 24 and 25. We will begin with supper on Friday and end by 4:00 EDT on Saturday.

Our Interim Conference Minister, Dr. Horace Sills, is to be our leader. Dr. Sills is, and has been, on the faculty of Lancaster Seminary in Lancaster, Pa. for many years. Not only has he been preparing seminary students to better understand what is required of good pastors but has also taught ministers who have not had benefit of seminary training how to become more effective in their ministry.

More information will be mailed out about this later. Circle those dates NOW on your calendar and keep them free.

The Rev. Roger Jones will be our convocation coordinator and should you wish to contact him his phone is: (404) 882-0378.

SUMMER CAMP

Our long awaited summer camp for juniors and junior highs will become a reality in August. Revs. Young, Jones and Blankenhorn looked at sites available to us and the most promising is the U.S. Corps of Engineers camp sites on the West Point Lake.

Roger Jones, through many years of experience in outdoor camping, feels that this setting will be excellent in working with these two age groups.

This first year it is our intent to begin training future leaders so the main emphasis will be placed on boys and girls whose pastors recommend as being mature and would like to learn to be leaders.

The exact date of camp won't be known until the first of June as the Corps policy is that reservations cannot be made until 60 days prior to time of use. Further information will be sent to the churches below.

100% CHURCHES

A special framed certificate for churches whose membership have given 100% to the new CHURCH BUILDERS CLUB. This certificate to be presented at the annual Southeast Conference in June.

How about your church? Wouldn't you like to be getting one?

ROGER KNIGHT OF OCLL STAFF TAPPED TO BE OUR CONFERENCE MINISTER

During our darkest hour a man of many elastic talents and grave integrity came and worked his fingernails to the bone with our staff and the Mission Priority Task Force. As we worked our way thru our self-examination under his tiresome (oops, tireless) leadership we became aware that never did so many owe so much to so one.

With half a gross of felt-tip pens and a dozen jumbo size news print pads he papered our walls with ideas, good, bad and interesting. As we progressed he kindly showed us just how ignorant we really were and under his dubious enlightenment it became evident that an interim conference minister was our first step not only toward recovery but toward sanity as well. As we look around us his vast wisdom is bearing fruit.

Roger comes to us from some little town, Minneapolis, near Lake Wobegon, Minnesota and anyone who has rubbed shoulders with Garrison Keillor and on occasion shook his clammy hand; can't be all bad—so VOTE FOR ROGER KNIGHT FOR CONFERENCE MINISTER!

EVELYN SEZ:

“it took 15 years to put out this first ‘occasional letter’ and wonders what the occasion will be for the next one.”

UCC HAS 2 NEW SETS OF CURRICULUM FOR BIBLE DISCOVERY AND DISCIPLESHIP ALIVE! FOR FALL 1998 USE

Our trained curriculum advocate, Ms. Ruth Crook, Christian Education Directors at Blackwoods Church near Headland, Alabama. Ruth attended the Curriculum Regional Meeting in Atlanta and is “sitting on ready” to share this information with all our our “Down South” churches.

MEN'S FELLOWSHIP OBTAIN ELDERLY U-HAUL VAN

After having borrowed and rented trucks to haul their building materials way up to Appalachian Habitat for years, and countless trips to Morgan Scott Counties in Tennessee hauling goodies for their thrift shops; our men decided to take a plunge on faith. Leon Lee, project director and Bill Tweed, procurement agent of our Caravan Campers Christian Service Team found a good buy in a van and with a short term loan from a friend or so made the purchase. They very soon thereafter contracted to perform services for The Fair; i.e., electrical, plumbing, concrete, etc. The Fellowship now has a truck for their projects of Christian work in helping others and the Oak Grove Country Fair has the assurance of years of help from this dedicated group of men.

GOD CALLS US INTO HIS CHURCH TO ACCEPT THE COST AND JOY OF

DISCIPLESHIP BEING HIS SERVANTS IN THE SERVICE OF MANKIND—

This from our UCC Statement of Faith has long been considered a high priority of our “Down South” Association Men’s Fellowships.

A couple, or so, years ago men from North Alabama, South Alabama-Northwest Florida and East Alabama replaced decking, roof beams and completely roofed a large building for the YWCO camp near Prattville, Alabama. Wives came along to cook for our men and some of the women joined the work on the roof.

Not only was this a much needed task but it gave opportunity for our people “from the Tennessee River to the Gulf of Mexico” to get to know one another.

CHRISTIAN WOMEN SEEKING TO UNDERSTAND CONDITIONS WHICH CAUSE HOMELESSNESS

was the theme of E. Ala.-W. Ga. Women’s Fellowship April 10. Mrs. Mott of Valley Rescue Mission of Columbus told of many reasons for the homeless. A major reason is no more low-cost housing. Next meeting September 25 at Lanett.

1988 OAK GROVE COUNTRY FAIR FRI. & SAT., AUG. 19-20

This year’s fair will feature over 150 arts and crafts booths by craftspeople from all over the Southeastern United States. Famous Oak Grove BBQ and other delightful food will be sold.

Cost of admission is still only \$2 for adults and youth, senior citizens \$1 and kids under 6 are free.

Oak Grove is just 5 miles north of Callaway Gardens just off US-27 going toward LaGrange. Just follow the signs.

TYPICAL BOOTH AT THE OAK GROVE COUNTRY FAIR

The Oak Grove Church near Pine Mountain, Georgia has as their major Christian outreach an annual country fair. On the 3rd weekend in August a 10-acre sylvan grove on the farm of Mr. Bennett Floyd, about a mile from the church, becomes alive with upward to 10,000 visitors from as far away as Atlanta and Columbus in Georgia and Montgomery, Alabama.

The work actually begins at the first of each year with the many tasks needed for such an undertaking.

Through these past 16 years the proceeds of their thousands of hours of labor have helped many, many people and organizations who otherwise could have been lacking. Their assistance is in 2 categories: educational and benevolent.

From the very first the Oak Grove Church recognized the need for continuing education for our student ministers and licentiates and have given generously to this end. This money has been mostly in form of matching funds dollar-for-dollar with associations of our Southern Alabama Area. Without the generosity of the Oak Grove Church's continuing education grants it is highly unlikely that our four associations could have offered the necessary courses for their ministers' development.

Also, the Fair, thru their benevolent fund, have been a blessing to ever so many people who had no where else to turn.

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Published by the Southeast Conference

United Church of Christ

P.O. Box 773

Phenix City, Alabama 36867

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**This transcription was recorded on July 22, 2013 and October 28, 2014 by
Mike Stroud, director of Project 66-16, an initiative to record, compile
and write the history of the Southeast Conference of the United Church
of Christ.**

